

## Message Text

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TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 034298

TOSEC 269-W/W PLEASE PASS SAM 86970

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 34298 ACTION AQABA INFO BONN 14 FEB

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 034298

TOSEC 269

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: SCHMIDT'S GERMAN POLICY: JOINING UP WITH DETENTE

1. FOLLOWING IS EUR ASSESSMENT OF SCHMIDT'S RECENT STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS TO THE BUNDESTAG WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST IN VIEW OF YOUR COMING VISIT TO BONN.

2. HELMUT SCHMIDT'S FIRST REPORT TO THE BUNDESTAG ON THE "STATE OF THE NATION" ON JANUARY 30 WAS INTERESTING EVIDENCE OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE CHANCELLOR INTENDS TO GO ABOUT PUTTING HIS OWN IMPRINT ON THE GERMAN POLICY INHERITED FROM THE  
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BRANDT/SCHEEL (AND BAHR) ADMINISTRATION.

3. AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, THE ADDRESS ADOPTS A MORE PRAGMATIC TONE THAN THOSE DELIVERED BY CHANCELLOR BRANDT. SCHMIDT FOR THE MOST PART ABANDONS LONG-TERM CONCEPTS OF GERMAN UNITY IN FAVOR OF PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP.

4. HIS CRITICISM OF BOTH THE GDR AND THE CDU/CSU HAS DRAWN STIFF REACTIONS FROM BOTH QUARTERS, BUT THE NEGATIVE REMARKS

ARE TEMPERED WITH OFFERS OF COOPERATION AND HOPES OF PROGRESS. THE GENERAL GOAL IN THE SPEECH WAS CLEARLY TO BALANCE SOME OF THE EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM OF THE PAST WITH A MORE REASONABLE HOPE FOR PROGRESS IN THE FUTURE.

5. MORE NOTEWORTHY WAS THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT RELATING INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS TO THE BROADER ASPECTS OF DETENTE. THERE IS A CLEAR STATEMENT OF GERMAN INTEREST IN CONTINUING PROGRESS IN DETENTE AS THE ONLY WAY OF MAINTAINING MOMENTUM FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS AND BERLIN AFFAIRS AND DIRECT REFERENCE TO FRG ABILITY TO USE ITS INFLUENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE, TO AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS. THEY PROVIDE A CLEAR DEFINITION OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH SCHMIDT HOPES TO OPERATE.

6. AS FAR AS WE CAN RECALL, THIS IS THE MOST EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO THESE ASPECTS OF THE GERMAN PROBLEM WHICH HAS BEEN MADE PUBLICLY BY A GERMAN LEADER. THE FRG HAS ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THAT OSTPOLITIK COULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT IN A VACUUM, BUT GOVERNMENT RHETORIC WHERE THE GDR IS CON-

CERNED HAS BEEN LIMITED MOSTLY TO THE NATIONAL GERMAN CONTEXT.

7. THIS AREA WAS, OF COURSE, OF GREAT PHILOSOPHICAL CONCERN TO BOTH BRANDT AND BAHR, WHEREAS SCHMIDT IS CLEARLY MORE INTERESTED IN RESULTS. IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE WEAKEST PARTS OF HIS ADDRESS WERE THOSE WHICH DEALT WITH THE CONCEPT OF THE GERMAN NATION, WHEREAS HE

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WAS ELOQUENT IN DESCRIBING HOW BROADER RELATIONSHIPS COULD

BE USED TO FURTHER THE CAUSE OF GERMAN UNITY. HE WAS QUITE SPECIFIC, FOR EXAMPLE, IN ARGUING THAT MORE COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR BY EAST BERLIN WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN GREATER OVERALL PROGRESS IN DETENTE AS WELL AS A BETTER INNER-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP.

8. A MAIN POINT OF FOCUS IN THIS REGARD WAS THE NEED TO KEEP ALL OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS INTERESTED IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DETENTE. MENTIONED IN THIS CONTEXT WERE NOT ONLY THE US AND USSR BUT ALSO THE EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS AND THE FRG'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS IN THE WEST. SCHMIDT REPEATED TWICE THE FACT THAT THE FRG HAD A "LIMITED BUT STILL SUBSTANTIAL" INFLUENCE ON THE MAINTENANCE OF CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR PROGRESS IN DETENTE. HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE FRG WOULD EXERT CONSIDERABLE EFFORT

TO MAKE PROFITABLE USE OF THIS INFLUENCE, REPEATING AGAIN THAT "WE GERMANS" REAP A NATIONAL AS WELL AS AN INTERNATIONAL BENEFIT FROM DETENTE.

9. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE WHETHER SCHMIDT FOLLOWS THIS LINE IN DEVELOPMENT OF HIS GERMAN POLICY IN COMING MONTHS. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW, SUCH A LINE PROBABLY HAS THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

-- GIVING A BROADER CONTEXT TO INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS TAKES OFF SOME OF THE PRESSURE FOR UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS IN TIES WITH THE GDR. "BROADER" EAST-WEST EFFORTS CAN ALSO BE PAINTED AS HELPING THE INNER-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP.

-- PROVIDING AN INNER-GERMAN COVER MIGHT MAKE ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS WITH THE EAST MORE FEASIBLE. A MORE FORTHCOMING APPROACH TO FROZEN RELATIONS WITH POLAND COULD FOR EXAMPLE BE JUSTIFIED ALONG THESE LINES.

-- DETENTE CAN ALSO PROVIDE A REASON FOR FAILURE TO IMPROVE TIES WITH THE GDR. IF RELATIONS SOUR, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE BLAME CAN ALWAYS BE PLACED ON THE GENERAL EAST-WEST SITUATION.

10. DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A LINE COULD HAVE DIRECT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES. IN ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS (MBFR, CSCE), WE MAY FIND THE FRG MORE READY THAN EVER TO USE ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LEVERAGE TO FURTHER ITS INTERESTS. THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO FRICTIONS ON OCCASION IN THE US-USSR RELATIONSHIP. IN THE LONGER RUN, SCHMIDT'S COMMENT ON FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY MAY HERALD A MORE AGGRESSIVE GERMAN STANCE, WITH THE FRG PERHAPS BECOMING MORE PREPARED THAN BEFORE TO EXTEND CREDITS AND CONCESSIONARY TERMS TO EASTERN EUROPE. INTEN-

TIONAL OR NOT, THIS COULD RESULT EVENTUALLY IN TAKING UP

SOME OF THE SLACK FOR THE SOVIETS CREATED BY THE US-USSR  
TRADE PROBLEMS. INGERSOLL UNQUOTE

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